

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In a packet fluctuation absorbing method and apparatus of the present invention, packets from a preceding node of a network are received. The packets are temporarily retained in a buffer. The  
5        respective packets are read from the buffer in the order of receiving of the packets at given time instants. The read packets are output to a following node of the network so as to absorb time-related fluctuations of the packets. A lower limit of the buffer that is predetermined as being larger than zero is stored. When the  
10       number of retained packets in the buffer is less than the stored lower limit as a result of the outputting of one of the read packets and a use count of the corresponding one of the read packets is equal to or larger than a predetermined use count upper limit, the  
15       corresponding packet in the retained packets of the buffer is discarded.

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